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ABSTRACT

The communication of messages from teacher to student often includes visual representation of the material under study. The place of mass media in the classroom becomes increasingly important as materials are developed and made available. Films and filmstrips of all types can be utilized in many ways, some of which have been the subjects of research studies pointing to their effectiveness. Films of children's books can be used to present stories, to culminate units, or to introduce units. Both films and filmstrips can also be used in a variety of ways to teach skills, to supplement classroom activities, and to motivate reluctant readers. Teachers intending to use films and filmstrips should follow guidelines in selection to assure maximum success. (MS)

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We live in a multi-sensory world--a world that words alone cannot convey. A great deal of the day of children in many parts of the world is spent in viewing multi-media materials on television, in theaters and in schools. Films and filmstrips are among the multi-media materials which have an extensive impact on young people. Few learning tools can match the effect of sound and motion together.

Americans devote approximately four to five hours daily to various forms of mass communication. The child coming to school has grown accustomed to the mass media as a teaching tool which insistently claims his attention. The media have achieved this high level of interest through massive expenditures of money on audience research, production know-how and technical development. Most teachers are aware that their instructional programs will be enhanced by incorporating in their teaching the educational appeal and effectiveness of mass media.

A major share of a learner's skills and information is acquired through reading. In America, approximately two and a half hours each school day are devoted to instructional experiences and exercises which depend upon listening to verbal stimuli. Excessive verbalism is not the entire answer in today's world of communication. Human beings are capable of shutting out unwanted audio stimuli. We know children often "tune teachers out." This is very frequently the reaction of children to a continuing barrage of words. Unless learning experiences are within the children's interest and comprehension levels, little or no progress is made toward achieving goals. Repetitious use of a single stimulus may quickly produce disinterest and boredom. Words alone no longer

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suffice--experiences with varied communication stimuli in addition to words are necessary for efficient learning.

Success in classroom learning is closely related to the clarity and understanding with which messages are communicated by the teacher, directly or through teacher selected information sources. When proper listening and viewing techniques are made as much a part of the learning situation as consideration of content, there is a notable increase in the amount of information children absorb and understand. Do we realize how frequently we say, "Do you see" for "Do you understand"?

In a classroom each pupil's background varies and influences his interpretation and understanding in a unique way. When the words of an author are read by thirty-five pupils in a class, each pupil's interpretation depends on his frame of reference. In turn, the author attempts to express his meaning by choosing a series of words, meaningful to him, to describe experiences he seeks to recreate in the imagination of his readers. Films and filmstrips are most helpful in eliminating referent confusion in reading.

Motion picture films are a universal language. Local adaptation of the sound language of a film enables the same film to be utilized world wide. Teachers have been quick to sense the great potential of motion picture films as a means for bringing the entire world of meaning into the classroom realistically and interestingly. Pupils are exposed to things as they exist visually and auditorily. During World War II, the 16 mm film came into its own as a training device.

Film utilization in improving reading interest and skills has been the subject of numerous research studies. Evidence establishes

a strong rationale for regular use of teaching films to produce in pupils desire, interest and readiness not only for more reading but ^{also} for more comprehensive reading. Project discovery: "An Adventure with Teaching and Learning with Films," Progress Report, Encyclopedia Britannica Films 1966, gives evidence that film use stimulates creative response by pupils through creative writing, research reading, vocabulary search and interpretative reading.

Hollywood, capital of the American film industry, has become involved in the production of educational films. Some of the most delightful and educationally helpful have been films to motivate young people to read library books. For example: the Newberry Award Book, Island of the Blue Dolphin, has been filmed in part, building up to a most exciting point in the story at which time the viewer is referred to the library to secure the book and finish the story, or the book is read to the class. In addition, related learning activities are initiated, such as making a class film, presenting a class play, writing an ending for the story, writing their own stories or taping an interview with story characters.

In Chicago, we have developed reading related film service units for classroom teachers, which can be used with the films. The materials serve as guides for teachers in utilizing the films in teaching reading. Each teacher guidance unit consists of a film introduction, presentation of new words, a film summary, a follow-up discussion guide, related work sheets and a test. Units have been developed for such films as: The Ugly Duckling and Three Little Pigs for the primary grades; and One Day at Teton Marsh, The Hound that Thought He Was a Raccoon and Grand Canyon for primary, intermediate and upper grades. (An interesting aspect of The Ugly Duckling is that the sound portion of the film is

done in animal speech and animation, only, to communicate feeling and reaction.)

(Show samples)

Producers have made films to develop reading skills. Southern Illinois University has a series of five phrase reading films using motion picture film to train pupils in skills normally taught with a tachistoscope.

Films for teacher in-service training in teaching reading have been developed by universities. For example: Syracuse University has an excellent series of eight films on Analysing Reading Achievement in Secondary Schools.

We have used film as a culminating activity in reading experiences, filming in 8 mm a play or a puppet show growing out of class reading.

Schools are using 16 mm sound and silent film, 8 mm sound and silent film and 8 mm continuous loop film.

The 8 mm continuous film loops have been enthusiastically received by teachers because they are activators to learning; they are simple and easy to use; they teach one or two concepts; they are excellent for use in clarification, review and reinforcement; they are self repeating; and they may be operated by a child in independent study. In addition, they are inexpensive.

(Show ~~Sample~~ range)

Eight mm film loops are available in color or black and white. Film loops are about four minutes in length and may be captioned to tell the story.

One producer has a long version of two or three cartridges

or a short version of one cartridge. The purpose of this series is to encourage reading by exciting the child's imagination. The presentation may be made to one child in a study carrel, or to a small group of children.

An effective series of filmloops entitled Tell the Whole Story motivates verbal, written or pictorial creative responses from children by presenting an adventure with sufficient action and plot to provide the audience with several possible story lines. The children are requested to finish the story in their own words.

Programs have been developed to relate sight and phonetic reading on flash cards to animated 8 mm loop films.

Another series of filmloops is designed to give children vicarious experiences related to stories in the readers.

A good teaching film or filmloop has the following characteristics: visualization--including good lighting and well defined image; motion; good organization--a smooth flowing together of photography and sound, if used; use of color (color is of most value when it helps the viewer gain a more accurate, realistic and vivid understanding of what is shown--color is desirable if it contributes to learning); well planned content; suitability; for this utilization; and accuracy of material.

Filmstrips have been referred to as "a headful in a handful."

(Show)

They are used in many ways to supplement reading programs. We find them being used independently or in conjunction with recordings and accompanying story books.

There are many advantages for teachers in using filmstrips: they can be used at any pace--quickly for introduction and review, and slowly for in-depth discussion; they may be used by the entire class, a small group or an individual; they are easy to store; and they are inexpensive. In addition, teachers and pupils may make their own filmstrips.

(Show sample)

Teachers use filmstrips in instruction to give children a concrete background for a reading lesson through aiding children in the understanding of word symbols, building vocabulary, teaching reading skills, focusing attention on learning activities, providing opportunities for individual study and developing interest in further pursuit of topics through story reading and library research.

^{for} In pre-school and primary grades, filmstrip story classics have been produced which children may see, hear and read along, transferring what they see and hear to words printed on a page. This procedure helps children approach stories in the readers with confidence. It develops skill in getting ears and eyes "in tune"--thus beginning to read naturally.

(Show sample)

At the readiness phase, filmstrips are used to help oral language development by building and extending word meaning and usage and by reviewing and extending concepts. Children are able to describe the film story orally. In retelling the stories, the children are challenged to think about new words and their meanings. Filmstrips are used to help children discriminate visually by noting likenesses and differences in detail

and by noting classification by color, size, shape and number. Sequence and main ideas are easy to identify.

Filmstrips are used to present phonics skills, developing auditory and visual perception of vowel sounds and letters, thus helping children acquire correct sound-letter association. Children are actively involved in naming pictures and words, practicing letter and sound discrimination, building new words and finding words in sentences which contain the sound elements being presented.

One series involves pupil participation combining visual and sound effects and the words of the narrator in eliciting pupil verbal responses to experiences with vowels and consonants.

Filmstrips are available to develop reading with comprehension through paragraph analysis and critical reading. Speed reading is taught with filmstrips developing phrase reading, space reading and skimming. The controlled reader, which utilizes filmstrips, is designed to widen the intellectual field of perception. The principle on which its use is based is that eye span directly affects the speed and comprehension with which a person reads. Therefore, most people can be trained to increase their speed of reading without loss of comprehension.

(Show film EDL)

Some very effective motivational filmstrips are being produced, such as "Read and Tell." The first half of each filmstrip deals with a favorite story, presenting pictures with captions, while the second half presents pictures, only, permitting children to tell the story on their own. This technique is used in a series called "Let's Talk and Let's Do" which

stimulate imagination, discussion and promote verbal skills while helping children think in sequential order and understand cause and effect.

Programs for reluctant readers in the intermediate^{and} upper grades have been developed. These programs appeal in particular to boys and have interest for girls. Each package consists of a filmstrip, a record, and the accompanying book. Authentic sounds and narrations accompany the filmstrip.

Another program for reluctant readers is designed for ages thirteen to fifteen
13 to 15 at the fourth grade reading level. The lessons are designed to promote language ability and improve the students' writing and thinking habits. The primary aim is to raise comprehension and the secondary aim is to increase speed. Each lesson presents a skill filmstrip slide and a vocabulary slide, plus a workbook assignment. In addition, every other lesson includes a reading slide which draws on different areas of the curriculum.

The disadvantages to filmstrips are the fact they are easily damaged and difficult, if not impossible, to repair. However, the new packaging of filmstrips on plastic cards^{es} minimizes this hazard to filmstrips.

One of the most exciting developments utilizing filmstrips and recordings is a sequenced program with careful pacing and frequent review programmed on an automatic pupil response system. It is supportive of any basic reading program, kindergarten through grade three.

(Show film)

Chris Shiver Age 7
Grade 2

In utilizing films and filmstrips, teachers should preview the materials, noting salient features and appropriate questions or comments, then adapting the material to class needs. How the instructor uses the media depends on his reason for using them. Prior to presenting the material to the class, class readiness for viewing should be developed by sharing with pupils the purpose of the showing, and pointing out important items. Necessary vocabulary should be introduced. Pupil participation during viewing should be encouraged, in particular in using filmstrips.

In choosing a film or filmstrip, a teacher should determine:

1. Does it deal with a subject applicable to ^{the} ~~your~~ teaching requirements?
2. Does it deal with a subject which is appropriately presented in this form (or would some other less expensive or more ^{pertinent} ~~appropriate~~ medium be recommended)?
3. Does it present the subject at a level (vocabulary level, conceptual level, interest) suitable for groups with which it is to be used?
4. Is it technically well produced (photography clear, enough close-ups, good composition and exposure)?
5. Is it educationally well produced (with good continuity and organization, thought provoking captions or sound, clear labeling, complete with review or self-tested feature at the end, if appropriate)?
6. Does it encourage student participation and critical thinking as opposed to "passive absorption" of facts?

Films and filmstrips may be used to stimulate enjoyment of reading famous classics; the literature representative of the diversity of a nation may be presented, for example, American Literature: (1) New England - Emerson and Thoreau, (2) Yukon - Jack London, (3) Chicago - Carl Sandburg, (4) Black literature - Langston Hughes and Richard Wright; or, The Romantic Age of English Literature: Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats; or, The Victorian Age of Charles Dickens; or, 14th Century England of Chaucer.

Educators can learn from industrial and military training programs which have used multi-media instruction with remarkable success.

Educational research evidence shows instructional goals can be significantly improved through wise selection and utilization of multi-media teaching aids, leading to a higher degree of retention than through lectures. Learning advantages are greater when the learner can see and hear what he is investigating. Research indicates vocabulary skills are significantly improved by use of films and filmstrips as compared with training utilizing non-audio-visual methods of teaching. The use of visuals often releases the reticence of pupils, stimulating pupils to talk and write freely about what they saw.

There is a challenge and a responsibility for educators to better equip teachers to use films and filmstrips in their classrooms. Frequently, teachers claim they recognize audio-visual materials are important to young people living in a multi-media world, but hesitate to use them because they do not know how to use the materials. Multi-media materials for

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the classroom are here to stay and will become increasingly
important in the future.